

BWC Strategy Session

2006 Race to Excellence

On February 22 and March 30, 2006, Best Workplaces for CommutersSM held Strategy Sessions to present the 2006 Race to Excellence. The following is a combined summary of both calls. Patrice Thornton, EPA's BWC Network manager, offered opening administrative remarks, provided agendas for the calls, and introduced the featured speakers:

- Marci McGuire, program manager, Bishop Ranch Business Park
- Brady Clark, senior analyst, Safeco Insurance
- Patti Lum, transportation coordinator, Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD)

Marci McGuire

Ms. McGuire serves as the employee transportation coordinator (ETC) for Bishop Ranch Business Park in San Ramon, California. The business park is home to 400 companies representing approximately 70,000 employees. Ms. McGuire explained that in 2005 she promoted the business park's BWC District designation in newsletters and in press releases. In addition, she created stickers featuring the Best Workplaces for Commuters logo and also produced water bottles and mugs showcasing the logo.

Brady Clark

Mr. Clark serves as a transportation coordinator for Safeco in Seattle, Washington. Safeco employs 9,000 people across the country, including several thousand employees in the Pacific Northwest. Mr. Clark explained that during the 2005 Race to Excellence he focused on promoting the company's Best Workplaces for Commuters designation internally through its Web site and newsletters. In addition, Mr. Clark oversaw a benchmarking study, attended strate-

gy sessions, and recruited Children's Hospital & Regional Medical Center to the list. Mr. Clark added that his management was impressed with the gold level award and pointed out that promoting the Best Workplaces for Commuters designation is a win-win situation for EPA and the employer.

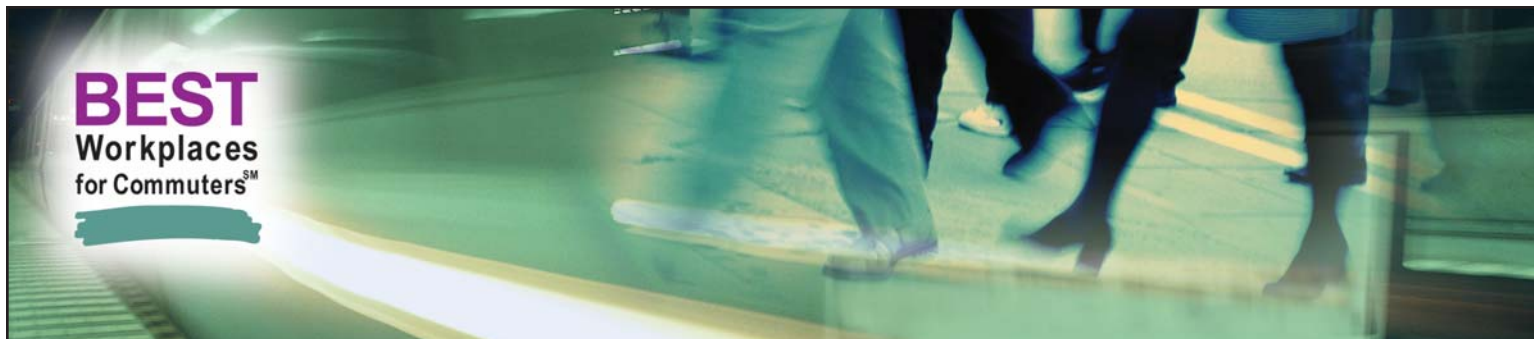
Patti Lum

Ms. Lum serves as the transportation coordinator for SMUD, a locally owned electric utility located in Sacramento, California. Ms. Lum explained that she promoted her organization's designation during the health fair. She staffed a booth at the fair and posted a Best Workplaces for Commuters sign in her area as well as at an information kiosk used by prospective job applicants. Ms. Lum added that SMUD posted the Best Workplaces for Commuters logo on the organization's internal and external Web sites used for job searches and in the environmental stewardship section of its annual report. In addition, Ms. Lum's management was impressed by the letter of recognition they received from EPA.

Patrice Thornton

Ms. Thornton began her presentation by describing the two distinct application categories; ETCs (or employer representatives) from Best Workplaces for Commuters-designated employers and BWC Network members. She explained that EPA recognizes ETCs for their efforts in promoting their employer's designation and recognizes BWC Network members for integrating Best Workplaces for Commuters into their local programs.

Ms. Thornton continued her presentation by guiding the participants through the Race to Excellence



application instructions. A brief summary of key points is included below. However, the full list of instructions and guidelines are available at www.bwc.gov/racetoexcellence/instructions.htm.

Key Points

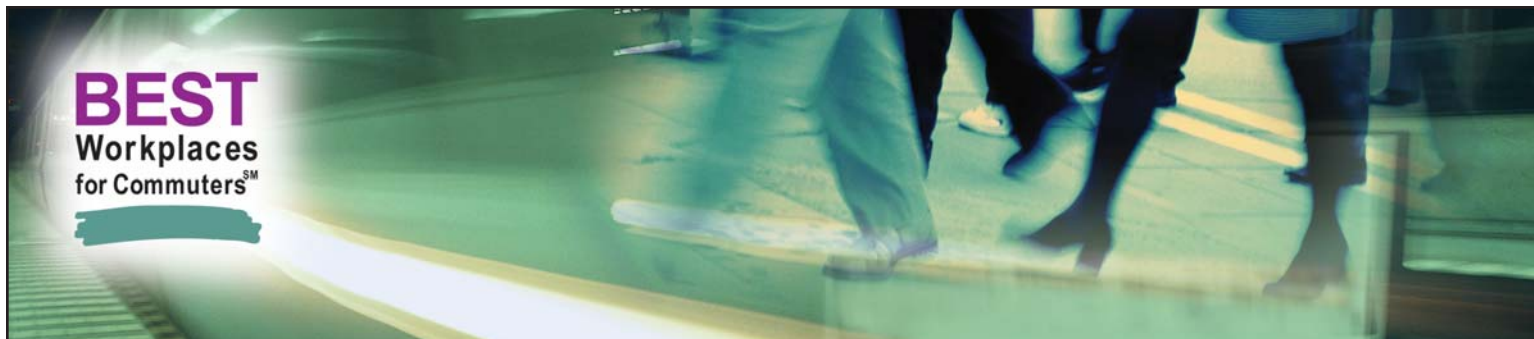
- The 2006 Race to Excellence is underway and will conclude on June 1, 2006. EPA must receive all applications and supplemental materials by June 9, 2006. Eligible activities are those completed between August 1, 2005 and June 1, 2006.
- The 2005 Race to Excellence included 46 participants and the recognition event was held in Anaheim, California.
- EPA will evaluate and compare all applications in each category and select gold, silver, and bronze level winners based on the content in the applications and on the supporting materials. In addition, EPA will select a “Best of” ETC from a BWC District, University, and FORTUNE 500 company.
- The first eligibility requirement for participating in the Race to Excellence is that all Best Workplaces for Commuters employers must be current with their annual update. If an employer’s update is not due until after June 1, 2006, the employer is considered current. BWC Network members do not have to submit annual updates. Any questions should be directed to bwc@epa.gov.
- The second eligibility requirement for participating in the Race to Excellence is that ETCs and BWC Network members must use the Best Workplaces for Commuters logo in at least two places, such as in Web pages, newsletters, job ads, or an e-mail signature block.
- Supporting materials will significantly help EPA evaluate applications. Therefore, submitting supporting materials will substantially improve Race to Excellence applications.
- EPA is granting additional weight to activities in the “recruiting” and “BWC designation/brand promotion” categories.
- Applicants do not have to complete activities in every achievement category. However, substantial activities in the “recruiting” and “BWC designation/brand promotion” categories will significantly improve the application.
- EPA has two pull up display banners, and posters available for applicants to use. E-mail bwc@epa.gov to request these tools.
- Race to Excellence participants are encouraged to use the online application. They can complete a portion of the application save, and continue later by logging back in using their contact information.

Open Discussion

Kristin Lundstrom from Ada County Highway District’s Commuteride program in Boise, Idaho, asked if her organization could apply for both the ETC and BWC Network member category. Ms. Thornton explained that the participant should select only one category.

Ms. Lundstrom asked if EPA created window clings and stickers specifically for BWC Network members. Ms. Thornton explained that these tools are under development and should be available in the near future, but encouraged the BWC Network members to use the new logo created specifically for Network members. The logo may be downloaded at www.bwc.gov/support/promo.htm.





BEST Workplaces for CommutersSM

Steve Cantor from Philips Semiconductors, a gold level award winner in 2005, pointed out that the award helped his employer secure positive press coverage globally. In addition, completing Race to Excellence activities and filling out the application was fairly easy and well worth the effort. Ms. Thornton added that EPA will distribute awards in late August at the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) International Conference in Boston, Massachusetts, and will also send recognition letters to the gold level winner's management and to an elected official in the participant's region.

Lindsey Montague from SANDAG, a BWC Network member, asked if her organization could partner with other organizations for purposes of the Race to Excellence. Ms. Thornton suggested that the groups apply in the "Combined Application for Multiple Groups" category.

Marsha Henry from Occidental Petroleum explained that she uses the Best Workplaces for Commuters logo in newsletters and supplied EPA with survey data. She asked if she could apply for the Race to Excellence. Ms. Thornton stated that she could, and encouraged her to do so.

A representative from Children's Hospital plans to promote Best Workplaces for Commuters around "bike-to-work month." However, part of the event falls after the June 1 deadline. Ms. Thornton suggested that the representative include all activities completed prior to June 1 for the 2006 Race to Excellence. The representative also asked if she could combine Children's Hospital's "Best People" logo with the Best Workplaces for Commuters logo. Ms. Thornton asked the representative to send the proposed logo to EPA for approval.

Brooke Hoberman from Rideworks of Greater New Haven explained that she is working with a

local employer to roll out new transportation demand management (TDM) programs. She asked if anyone on the call had suggestions on where to find an example pilot project or information on an appropriate timeline for the roll out. Ms. Thornton suggested that Ms. Hoberman post the question on the TDM Listserv. Anyone with suggestions can reach Ms. Hoberman at <bhoberman@rideworks.com>.

Gay Pierce from Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) introduced Stephanie Martin to the group. Ms. Martin will attend many of the strategy sessions in the future.

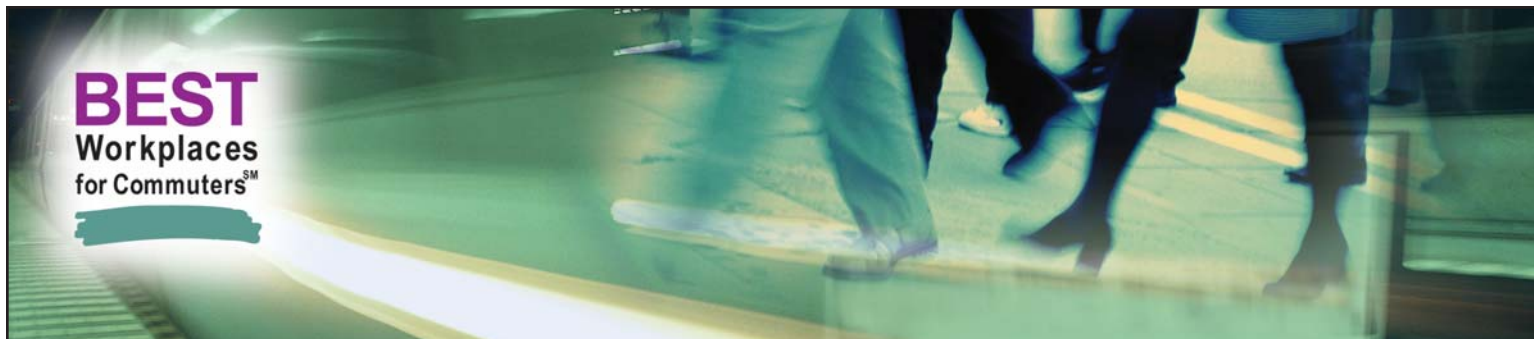
Abby Williams from the state of Arizona noted that she participated in the 2005 Race to Excellence, and the silver level award she received brought new life to her organization's Best Workplaces for Commuters designation. She added that her organization received more positive press and that participating in the race was certainly worth the effort.

Ms. Pierce explained that her organization works with their consultants to recruit a specific number of employers each year. She also asked if she should remind the Houston-area employers when they are due to submit annual updates. Ms. Thornton suggested that she should and noted that ERG account managers (EPA's consultants) also send e-mail reminders at the beginning of the month each employer is due to report.

Ms. Pierce noted that H-GAC had to work very hard to implement a commuter benefit package that allowed them to qualify for the Best Workplaces for Commuters designation. She added that TREK, a Houston-area TMO, should be able to recruit some additional FORTUNE 500 companies this year.

A representative from Baylor College in Houston mentioned that she had not heard of the Race to





Excellence until this call and was anxious to participate. Ms. Thornton suggested featuring the Best Workplaces for Commuters window cling and the pull up banner. The representative stated that she is already using the logo in her e-mail signature block and will add it to their Web site.

Closing

Ms. Thornton closed the discussion and reiterated that anyone planning to participate in the Race to Excellence should fill in the first section of the application. In addition, she informed the participants that a summary of the strategy session will be available on the Best Workplaces for Commuters Web site at <www.bwc.gov>.



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